3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

177 gods and call themselves Hindus. We, for our part,
797 have seen many of these reclaimed Santals, (and it was claimed by the authorities of the Hindu Mission that they succeeded in reclaiming a lakh of people within a short time in the Santal Parganas)... a procession of white-robed Santals wearing Hindu dresses, carrying tall sticks and anointed with sandal-pastes. Some of them carried drums and flutes while going to offer pujas to the Goddess Durga, cheek by jowl with the Hindus.[1]

177 For our part, we think that the task of the Hindu
162 Mission is an easier one when we remember that
[797] 586,499 persons were found to be Hindu Santals in Bihar and Orissa in the census report of 1931, and in the Mayurbhanj State 254,596 persons returned themselves as Hindu Santals in the last
177 census. It is also worthy of note that the Mayur-
[641] bhanj State has always shown eagerness to extend to the Santals all privileges open to others. Cow-killing
[656] is prohibited within the State, and how far Hindu ideas have penetrated into Santal society will be apparent even to a casual observer.

Added to these, it must be remembered that the
[361] Santals do not live in water-tight compartments of their own, although their hamlets are separate from the rest. The Hindu "Kamar" does work for them,

1 The Hindu Mission in Bihar and Orissa came into existence in 1925.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

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ing to the verdict of the scientists at the last session of the Indian Science Congress." He calls it "unreliable," and says, "it would be nearer truth to say that ethnically, tribal numbers would be four times what is shown in the Census."

162

The most important tribes, according to the Census of 1951, are Gond—1,232,886 ; Santal—28,11,578, Bhil – 1,160,299: Oraon – 6,44,042; Khond – 280,561: Munda – 5,85,211.

The total number of scheduled tribes, according to the Census of 1951 stands at 19·1 millions. So it has been computed that out of 1000 Indians, 54 belong to the tribal communities.

This may be usefully compared with the previous population figures. According to the Census of 1931, the aboriginal population of India numbered 22½ millions in round numbers and formed 6½ p.c of the total Indian population. Then also, the Gonds stood first in number, the Santals second and the Bhils third.

The total number of Santals in (undivided) India, in 1941 has been tabulated by Rev. J. Gausdal[1] to be 2,902,266 (N.B. He gives his own estimate of Assam and Nepal figures).

In 1931, they numbered 2,508,789 from 2,265,282 in 1921. As has been already stated

1 *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, Science, Vol. XIX, p. 4.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

they now stand at 28,11,578 according to the census of 1951. 162

Now that the Santals are widely scattered, the following table compiled from the Census records, may be found interesting for reference.[1]

AREA	1891	1911	1931	1941
Bihar	1,040,346	1,169,037	1,411,950	1,534,646
C. P.	...	10,432	...	4,958
Orissa	104,515	238,309	300,183	363,637
Bengal	309,762	669,420	796,656	829,025
Assam	39,422	59,008	101,949	150,000
Nepal	...	...	10,000	20,000
TOTAL	1,494,045	2,146,206	2,620,738	2,902,266

We now intend to give the readers an idea of the population figures of the Santals, area by area. for comparative studies, based on the past Census figures.

Bihar and Orissa

Coming to details. we find that the total number of Santals in Bihar and Orissa in 1931 was 1,712,133. males being 855,103 and females

1 *Ibid.*

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

162 857,030. They are by far the largest number of aboriginal tribes and exceed in number all the Hindu castes except the Brahmins and the Gowalas.[1] They populate the Santal Parganas very thickly, where more than one person out of every three is a Santal. Over the province as a whole there has been an addition of 234,662 (or about 16 per cent) to the total number enumerated at the last Census.[2]

The numerical strength of the Santals in Bihar and Orissa, according to the Census Report 1931, will be clear from the following comparative figures with the other tribes in the same province:—

Ho	...	523,158
Kharia	...	146,037
Khond	...	315,709
Mundà	...	549,764
Oraon	...	637,112
Santal	...	1,712,133

162 771 So far as the religion of the Santals is concerned, the Census returns in Bihar and Orissa (1931) showed 586,499 persons (293,807 males and 292,692 females) as Hindu Santals. The Christian Santals were returned at a total number of 13,279 (males 6,754 and females 6,525); whereas, those

[113]

1 This is compiled from the *Census Reports of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa*, 1931.

2 Ref. *Census Report*, Bihar and Orissa, 1931, p. 294.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

following tribal religions numbered 1,112,355 (males 554,542 and females 557,813). 162 771

As regards literacy, the Census Report of 1931 records that out of a population of 1,304,034 Santals over seven years of age, Bihar and Orissa contained 8,899 literates. Coming to the Santal Parganas, the important Santal habitat, we find that there were in 1931 only 3,490 literate Santals. 162 212

Feudatory States

The total Santal population of the Feudatory States in Bihar and Orissa, according to the Census of 1931, is 309,504. (Census Report 1931, Bengal and Sikkim). 162

In Mayurbhanj, they constitute a little over 29 per cent of the population, their total strength according to the Census of 1931 was 258,195 (127,365 males and 130,830 females). Out of them 254,596 were returned as Hindus, 3,488 Animists and 111 Christians. [771]

As regards the variations in the Santal population in Mayurbhanj, it may be stated that the Santals numbered 91,490 in 1891. "In 1901, they numbered 185,149 which is more than double the previous figure. A further increase by more than 15 per cent in their number occurred in the Census of 1911, when they numbered 214,164. In the succeeding Census of 1921, the rate of

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

162 increase was abnormally low. It was a little over
[164] 3 per cent. The influenza epidemic was responsible for this result. In the present Census, the rate of growth has been nearly by 17 per cent."[1] The total variation in the Santal population of Mayurbhanj from 1891 to 1931 is + 166,705.

162 As regards literacy amongst the Mayurbhanj
212 Santals, it may be noted that while in 1911, there were 720 literate males and 38 literate females, the number of literate males and females in 1921 stood at 970 and 12 respectively. In 1931, however, the numbers rose to 2,044 males and 32 females.

162 Summing up, it may be said that the Santal
212 literates constitute 0·78 per cent out of their total
171 strength in Mayurbhanj, whereas, the Gonds record 3·37 per cent. This may also be usefully compared with the literacy figures of one of the Hindu castes viz. Kayasthas in Mayurbhanj which reach 36·39 per cent.

162 Out of the other Orissa states, it is gathered that Nilgiri contains 3,235 and Keonjhar 16,172 Santals according to the Census of 1931; and in both these states, the net variation from the year 1891 to 1931 was + 2,901 and + 14,446 respectively.[2]

[113] 1. Ref. *Mayurbhanj Census Report*, 1931, Vol. I, p. 151.

2 These figures were kindly supplied by Mr. P. K. Dass, Asst. Secretary, Mayurbhanj State.

3t Mukherjea O, Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Bengal

So far as Bengal is concerned, the Santals numbered 712,040 in 1921, but increased by 11·9 per cent to 796,656 in 1931. Thus while in 1891, the Santals formed 7·77 per cent per mille of the total population, in 1901 the number rose to 12·33, in 1911 to 14·45 and in 1931 it came upto 15·56. In regard to their religion, it is noticeable that while in 1921 only 158,383 were returned as Hindus and 553,657 under tribal religions, the Census figures of 1931 returned 433,502 as Hindu Santals and 352,386 as following tribal religions. The result is seen in an increase of Hindu Santals from 22·2 per cent of the total to almost 54·5 per cent. This phenomenal increase of Hindu Santals is explained as due to the missionary activities of the Hindu Mission and the natural increase in the number of Hindus in the tribe.

As regards literacy, the ratio (according to the Census of 1931) stands at 9 literates per 1,000 of the same age and sex above 7 years of age, there being 3 literates in English per 10,000 of the same age and sex.

We quote below the following table from the Census Report of 1931 (Bengal and Sikkim) showing the locality, actual number of Santals in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from 1901 to 1931 and the per-

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

• 162 centages they constitute of the total population of the area.

Locality	Actual number of Santals				Percentage of total population			
	1931	1921	1911	1901	1931	1921	1911	1901
Bihar & Orissa	1,712,133	1,477,471	1,407,846	1,298,347	4·0	3·9	3·7	3·6
Santal Parganas	754,804	676,459	668,149	670,535	36·8	37·7	35·6	37·1
Purnea	46,995	34,995	21,022	6,848	2·1	1·7	1·1	0·4
• Bhagalpur	30,799	33,503	25,249	26,632	1·4	1·6	1·2	1·3
Monghyr	26,742	23,080	20,479	19,758	1·2	1·1	1·0	1·0
Hazaribagh	129,103	98,738	93,269	78,379	8·5	7·7	7·2	6·7
Manbhum	282,315	238,747	282,296	195,400	15·6	13·4	15·0	13·0
Singhbum	108,890	94,381	88,241	77,868	11·7	12·4	12·7	12·6
Feudatory States	309,504	261,791	247,264	211,937	6·7	6·6	6·3	6·4
Elsewhere	22,981	15,377	11,377	11,500	·09	·07	·05	0·5
Bengal	796,656	712,040	670,689	570,727	1·6	1·5	1·4	1·3
Dinajpur	130,328	120,211	110,244	74,101	7·4	7·0	6·5	4·7
• Malda	72,145	72,140	66,523	52,126	6·8	7·3	6·6	5·9
• Bogra	5,351	7,182	5,826	4,533	·5	·7	·6	·5
Rajshahi	25,591	21,300	14,145	4,858	1·8	1·4	1·0	·3
Jalpaiguri	27,859	23,988	22,641	10,895	2·8	2·6	2·5	1·4
Birbhum	64,079	57,180	56,087	47,738	6·8	6·7	6·0	5·3
Burdwan	101,522	79,099	55,978	46,538	6·0	5·5	4·3	3·0
Bankura	114,577	104,912	115,017	105,722	10·3	10·3	10·1	9·5
Hughly	38,013	34,963	22,992	9,986	3·4	3·2	2·1	·9
Midnapur	169,750	152,751	161,532	148,391	6·1	5·7	5·7	5·3
Murshidabad	22,725	18,401	14,393	12,556	1·7	1·5	1·0	·9
Elsewhere	24,716	19,913	15,314	23,308	·07	0·6	0·5	·08

162 It will be clear from the foregoing that the Santals in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, have increased from 1,869,074 to 2,508,789 during these thirty years, recording a striking growth of over 33 per cent in a single generation. And when we remember that the rate of growth is double that achieved by the rest of the population, we can only be struck with "the hardy and prolific character of the tribe."

[167] • The corresponding decrease in Santal Population from 1921 to 1931 in the districts of Bhagalpur, Malda and Bogra is presumably due to migration to other districts.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
MAYURBHANJ

that one has been lost. Regarding the *Bedeas*, it is important to note the fact that there exists in Mayurbhanj, a tribe of aboriginals bearing the same name. And naturally it struck us if the extinct clan of the original Santals developed into a separate tribe in course of time. Our enquiries revealed however that the *Bedias* of Mayurbhanj do not identify themselves as Santals in origin, nor do the Santals consider them to be of their tribe. The following extract from the *Census Report of Mayurbhanj*, Vol. I, page 157 may usefully be quoted here:—

"According to the present census, the total strength of the Bedias, who call themselves *Chot Kurmi* or *San Kurmi*, is 578, with 292 males and 286 females. They are all returned from the Bamanghati subdivision. Though they claim to be allied in one way or another to the *Kurmis*, the latter relegate them to the position of that class of gypsies, acrobats and snake-catchers, who under a similar name but with a different spelling (*Bediya*) are found in Bihar. This small tribe is known in the state for their filthy habits and criminal propensities."

In this connexion, it is however important to remember that the *Kurmis* (or Kurmbis) with whom the *Bedias* of Mayurbhanj ally themselves, belonged to the parent stock of the Santals in course of their

St Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

tion of man and his culture in its various facets. 000
But in their enthusiasm both the anthropologist and the collector of folk-lore failed to foresee that these pre-historic stocks were going to be endowed with citizenship rights which implied education and culture as we understand the terms. With independence, we now find the aboriginals under the special protection of the state. There are ministries of tribal welfare specially devoted to their interests. The Adim Jati Sevak Sangha has been doing yeoman's service in the research work amongst the tribals and trying to level them up to the rest of the population; education is within the reach of these hitherto neglected people and the highups mix and fraternise with them in their songs and dances. As a result literacy is increasing (thanks to the opening of tribal schools) and education (we make no apology for using the word) is spreading beyond our imagination.

In the chapter on population, we have given the 871
reader an idea of the literacy (based on old census 162.
figures) amongst the Santals, and although the figures are not impressive, it cannot be said that the Santal did not have the benefits of modern education. In the statistics supplied by the Education Officer of Mayurbhanj state, we noted that the number of aboriginal pupils rose from 4,801 in

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

871 1924-25 to 8,473 in 1938-39; i.e. on an average
162 it doubled in course of 15 years.

871 Although in all areas the progress was not the
162 same (in the Santal Parganas during this period the
184 number of pupils under instruction rose very slightly viz. 1428), there was an awareness of the position as evidenced by the fact that the Santal Parganas Enquiry Committee reviewing the position *vis-a-vis* Santal education began their work with the proposition, "The first essential of the aboriginal is more education" and lamented that there was not a single school for the 60,000 Paharias in the Damin Hills.

871 The British government did not neglect abori-
648 ginal education but they had no visible plan of
797 their own. This task was urgently taken up by
177 the missionaries, who along with their hospitals and social service units, ran aboriginal schools of their own. As a result of their social and spiritual programme, a very large number of these tribals were converted to Christianity which meant a change lock, stock and barrel, of aboriginal sets of values. Their souls were sought to be saved. But out emerged a type of English educated people who
[539] like our young Michael Madhusudan Dutta might have exclaimed in rapture:

> Long sunk in superstition's night
> By Sin and Satan driven,

3: Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

bani, Bara Palassy and Pipra areas of Santal Parganas, the special puja to Kali in the Dumka Subdivision, the assemblage *en masse* of the Santals in the past to sing and dance during Hindu festivals, have very deep implications that these are broad-based on a synthesis peculiar to Indian culture.

The infiltration made itself positively felt in the Santal Parganas in 1871, with variants repeated in 1942, when many Santals declared themselves as *Safa-hor* (the pure men) after eschewing fowls, pigs, and intoxicating liquor but taking to *Ganja* (hemp, *Canabis Sativa*) and tried to bring it on a line with Hindu practices. It led for a time to some social ferment and had also political repercussions. This impact may be corroborated by a reference to the Census Report of 1931 when 586,499 Santals declared themselves as Hindus in Bihar and Orissa; and in the state of Mayurbhanj, 154,596 were returned as such. Added to these, there were movements for reclamation of the Santal to the Hindu fold, specially in Rajmahal, Balurghat and other areas. In 1936, it was claimed in the Santal Parganas, that due to their very recent activities (of the Hindu Mission), about a lakh of Santals came to the Hindu fold. In those times, we have seen, the Santals came to the Durgasthan at Dumka, to worship the goddess in their own rights as Hindus. They would recall that in their traditions and insti-

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

174 177 social order of the Pre-Dravidian Santals. In the Pre-Aryan and Pre-Dravidian culture of India, the Santals rather than the Mundas or Hos of Chota Nagpur stand in the lime light. Similarly their contact with Dravidian culture which at one time was not at all confined to Southern India, is well proved from their neighbours, the Malers, who in language along with the Chota Nagpur Oraons speak a Dravidian 197 tongue. Linguistically the Santals belong to what has been called the westernmost peripheral representatives of what is the Hawaiian type family in the Pacific.

161 At the Census of 1931 they numbered over two and a half million. In Santal Parganas the number was 162 7,54,804, the rest was distributed over the other parts of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Assam. If we study the strength of the population of the Santal during the thirty years (1901 to 1931) in the two provinces, Bihar and Bengal combined, it can be seen that they have increased from 18,69,074 to 25,08,789 which represents an increase of over 33 percent in a single generation.

174 As regards the origin of the Santals it is very difficult to say anything definite. There are no authentic written records of their own. From the traditions, customs, language and physical features of Santals one can conjecture to a certain extent about their origin. On the basis of the above items several theories have been put forward to account for their origin. Revd. 3 Skrefsurd[1] has suggested that the Santals entered India 114 174 from the North West and first settled in the Punjab and then made their way to their present habitat at Chota Nagpur. But Colonel Dalton and Sir William Hunter[2],

1. Introduction to Grammar of Santali Language 1873.
2. Annals of Rural Bengal.
3. [Erratum: this should read "Rev." Cf. errata sheet, category 116, p. x -- Analyst]

4: Biswas D, E-3,4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

retired to the Rajmahal Hills. In 1851 Captain Sherwill found 83,265 Santals in Daminikoh alone. 175 167 14 [162]

Santal Rebellion (Hul) of 1855. Mr. Buchanan Hamilton has mentioned in his unpublished manuscipt that "the Santals has settled in the Dumka sub-division by 1809 having come last from Birbhum in consequence of the annoyance which they have received from its Zamindars". In 1818 Mr. Sutherland found them engaged in clearing the jungles under the hills in Godda sub-division. Mr. Dunbar, Collector of Bhagalpur, mentioned that by 1836 about 427 villages had been established by the Santals in the Damin area.

These Santals of the Daminikoh in the year 1855 became rebellious. The chief cause of this rebellion was the oppression of the Mahajans, the Darogas and the corruption of the Amlas. These Mahajans gave the Santals money as a loan with high interest and one he had contracted a debt he had little chance of escape, because if his creditor sued him, the Santals could not produce any authentic record, whereas the creditor had his ledgers and day book. These Mahajans sometimes without going to court to realise his capital and interest, sent his agents to take away their cattle forcibly. The Santals bore this oppression thinking that it was useless for them to obtain redress against the wealthy Mahajans, besides that had not enough money to pay the Amlas and Pleaders in the Court. If they approached the Court and loged a complaint against these Mahajans, they only got an order on the police to enquire and report, but the police generally sided with the Mahajans and submitted reports in their favour. [1 Erratum: i.e., "once". 2 Erratum: i.e., Mahajans. -- Analyst] 175 648 669 426 [692] [625]

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

the food of the *Turuk*, rice or other food, the spirits will run away. If anyone has fever or if we want to exorcize a spirit, we try to give him curds made by a *Turuk* to eat. They say that in olden times one Mirza Turuk drove us from the country we were in. On a certain plain we made ready twelve carts and fled away across the open country. Mirza Turuk searched and could not find us. He thought: 'I must search for the tracks of twelve carts.' However, as we drove the twelve carts one behind the other, we made only one track, and so he never found us." The local Moslem population is very small[1] and confined to one or two villages of weavers and cultivators, who are themselves deeply affected by the Hindu environment. No doubt the story is very different in those districts of Northern Bengal where the Moslems predominate, but even there the great dissimilarity between Moslem and Santal culture probably militates against influences passing from the one to the other.

Christian influence, the result of a sustained and conscious effort on the part of missions, is considered later. Of deliberate efforts to Hinduize the religious practices and beliefs of the Santals the area is ignorant.

NOTE TO CHAPTER 2

The relation of the aboriginal peoples to Hindu society has given rise to much controversy and discussion in India, not all of which is conducted in a spirit of scientific inquiry. An able presentation of many of the facts dealt with in this and the previous chapter, together with much else, and written from the Hindu standpoint, can be found in *The Aborigines—"So-called"—and Their Future*, by G. S. Ghurye, Ph.D. (Cantab.), published by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, 1943.

[1] The figures given for the local Moslem population in 1931 were as follows:

	Males	*Females*
Ramkandh Thana	238	190
Raipore Thana	358	478

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5: Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

and in fact it is used extensively as a storeroom, particularly for stacking the bundles of reserve rice. Any man may pass through this opening, but no woman may do so unless she belongs to the family living there. The daughters of the house are debarred from going into the *bhitar* after they have married. After marriage a woman belongs to her husband's family, and this prohibition is one of several that are enforced with a view to ensuring that she shall not bring calamity on her husband's house by continuing to have dealings with the spirits of her father's home. She has to remove herself from their influence. Within the *bhitar* dwells the house spirit, and it is also visited by the ancestors of the family. There offerings of food and beer are made to the immediate ancestors. In certain instances sub-clan sacrifices are made in this inner room. The names of the spirits to whom the sub-clan sacrifices are made are kept secret. The knowledge of these names is handed down within each family from the father to the eldest son or other heir, and under no circumstances should it be imparted to others. An instance was reported of a man who was in deep distress because his father had died without his having had an opportunity of learning the name of the *abge*, as this spirit is called. He hoped to learn the name from one of his father's brothers, but this person also died before he could pass on the information. Shortly afterwards his dead uncle appeared to him in a dream and revealed the name, and he confirmed the correctness of the information by visiting yet another uncle who knew the secret. This story shows that the rules of silence are not too strictly observed within the family circle. Women are not allowed to learn the name, and in most cases they are excluded from participating in the sacrificial meal. The same prohibition applies to sons-in-law, though one of the Soren sub-clans is allowed to leave a portion of the food from the meal for their sons-in-law. When they summon them to eat, however, they address them as they would the household dogs, which emphasizes their separation from the family and from the sub-clan.

Some features of the Santal cult, as well as an indication of the ways in which it may develop, can be illustrated by a description of the shrine that stands on the outskirts of the village of Sarenga. This village was at first a Santal settlement, but it is now a place of nearly two thousand inhabitants, most of whom are Bengali Hindus. The present-day Santal inhabitants number barely one hundred, but amongst them are some who claim descent from the founders of the village, who lived,

so they say, nine generations ago.

St Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

so they say, nine generations ago. One of the first settlers was one Lokhon Mañjhi. Just before he died he had been paying a visit to the *boiga than*, probably the sacred grove of that day. It occupied a site that is now taken by the landlord's rent-collecting office and has quite disappeared. He returned home, sat down on his string bed to have a smoke, then suddenly fell over and died. Almost immediately, and before the news of Lokhon's death had passed through the village, a young man in the courtyard of a house belonging to Lokhon's paternal aunt became possessed. He announced to the assembled company that he was Lokhon and that they must make a sacred place for him. They chose an old banyan tree to the north of the village. This tree has long since disappeared, but its place has been taken by an *atuak'* tree, which serves equally well. The fact that the village has become largely non-Santal means that the sanctity of this particular shrine is recognized by people belonging to many different castes, and its reputation has grown with the years. All the offerings there are made by the Santal priest in the village, a man who is descended from Lokhon. He is also the local Santal headman and combines the two offices in one person; such an arrangement is not unique and seems to have been adopted often in places where the Santals are living surrounded by other communities. He and his predecessors have adapted themselves to the new situation, and so this shrine, now utilized by many non-Santals, is still served by a Santal priest. Every market day people from the surrounding villages come to offer sacrifices, to ask a boon, or to leave their thank-offerings of money for blessings that have been granted. Some of the more unscrupulous of the local inhabitants defy the spirits by hanging around and picking up the coins left by the devout.

At the base of the tree is the shrine, formed by a raised earthen mound on which there are many burnt clay effigies of horses and elephants. In front of the mound a narrow path has been cleared for about eight feet, so that the tree is approached from the west, the direction in which all the effigies are facing. This path has been cleared through a jumbled heap of innumerable small clay animal effigies that have been left at the shrine by devotees in the past in the performance of their vows. Here there were many opportunities for watching the priest at work, and the chief impression that stands out is the dignity and reverence with which he performed his tasks. On a particular Thursday in 1941 he first of all cleared a small space at